

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6072

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH MNUC PARM UK

SUBJECT: BRITISH PROPOSAL FOR INTERNATIONALLY SUPER-
VISED PLUTONIUM "STRONGROOM"

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. THE JULY 11 FINANCIAL TIMES
CARRIES A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE BY DAVID FISHLOCK DETAILING
THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL TO BUILD AN INTERNA-
TIONALLY SUPERVISED "STRONGROOM" FOR THE STORAGE OF
PLUTONIUM AT THE BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS LIMITED (BNFL)
WINDSCALE FACILITY. SEEN BY HMG AS THE MOST PROMISING
NON-PROLIFERATION MEASURE AVAILABLE AT PRESENT, THE
STRONGROOM COULD PROBABLY BE SET UP WITHIN TWO YEARS
OF APPROVAL AND WOULD COST AN ESTIMATED 4.5 MILLION
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POUNDS STERLING TO CONSTRUCT FOR TEN TONS OF PLUTONIUM
OXIDE STORAGE AND ANOTHER 1.75 TO 3 MILLION A YEAR TO
OPERATE.

2. AFTER REVIEWING THE THREE RECENT "REBUFFS" TO PRESI-
DENT CARTER'S NON-PROLIFERATION PROPOSALS--THE AUSTRALIAN
THREAT TO WITHHOLD URANIUM SUPPLIES FROM EEC NATIONS IF

THEIR MARKETS ARE NOT OPENED TO AUSTRALIA'S STEEL AND DAIRY PRODUCTS, THE FRG'S DECISION TO CONSTRUCT A LARGE COMMERCIAL REPROCESSING PLANT AND THE FRANCO-GERMAN AGREEMENT TO PROCEED WITH A COMMERCIAL FAST BREEDER REACTOR--FISHLOCK NOTES THAT UNTIL LAST WEEK THE PRESIDENT WAS APPARENTLY CONVINCED THAT INTERNATIONAL OPINION WOULD EVENTUALLY SUPPORT HIS PROPOSED BAN ON CIVIL PLUTONIUM. HOWEVER, OTHER NUCLEAR NATIONS, INCLUDING THE USSR, ARE SAID TO SEE INTERNATIONAL PLUTONIUM STORAGE AS A VERY PROMISING INTERIM MEASURE WHICH MIGHT BE IMPLEMENTED MUCH MORE QUICKLY THAN ANY OTHER ANTI-PROLIFERATION MEASURE. IT IS NOTED THAT IAEA CURRENTLY IS WRESTLING WITH THE ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS OF "RELEASE CRITERIA" AND MINIMUM REPROCESSING PLANT SIZE.

3. FISHLOCK CONCLUDES THAT THE BRITISH VIEW IS THAT THE FORUM TO RESOLVE SUCH QUESTIONS IS THE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION PROGRAM WHICH IS DUE TO HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING THIS AUTUMN. THIS EXERCISE WAS ORIGINALLY SEEN IN WHITEHALL SIMPLY AS AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE THAT THE NEW U.S. NON-PROLIFERATION THEORIES WERE CORRECT. BUT BRITAIN AND OTHER NATIONS HAVE SUCCEEDED IN BROADENING ITS TERMS TO MAKE A DOWN TO EARTH COMPARISON OF ALL POTENTIAL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLES. INCLUDING THE USE OF REPROCESSING AND THE FAST BREEDER REACTOR. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. THE FISHLOCK ARTICLE REVIEWS GROUND WHICH IS FAMILIAR EXCEPT FOR THE SPECIFIC FIGURES PROVIDED FOR CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATING COSTS OF A PLUTONIUM STOREROOM. ACCORDING TO FCO, THE MOST LIKELY SOURCE OF THIS DATA IS BNFL ITSELF. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

BREWSTER

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Sent Date: 13-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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